

Minutes of Board Meeting
April 8, 2020
10:00 a.m.
Conference Call

Present

David Connell, Chairman
Jeff Markey, Vice Chairman
Jeff Wigington, Secretary
Rachel Little
Bob Pierce
Wallace Coopwood
Britt Fleck

Not Present

Jim Cole

Also attending the meeting via conference call was Kimberly Daniel from the State Attorney General's Office and members of the DDS Staff.

Establish Quorum/Call to Order

Chairman Connell confirmed the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Connell called for a motion regarding the minutes from the March 11, 2020 Board meeting. Jeff Markey made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes as presented; Britt Fleck seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Commissioner's Report

The Commissioner thanked all the Board members for being able to join the meeting virtually. The agency is doing its best to social distance. All DDS staff joined the meeting from their remote locations. Commissioner Moore asked all callers outside of DDS staff, Board members or the Attorney General's Office to identify themselves so they could be recognized. There were no other attendees on the call.

The Commissioner informed the Board he would be giving an update on COVID-19 as this is a difficult time for all. The Commissioner wanted to inform the Board of DDS's response during this pandemic. DDS is vital to the infrastructure of the State of Georgia and the nation. Our agency provides credentials to those persons delivering food to our stores and other essential items. DDS has changed the agency's operations to meet the critical needs of the citizens of Georgia. Commissioner Moore directed the Board to review the timeline that provides all the actions the agency has taken since the pandemic started. The Commissioner thanked the Executive Team, Managers, IT, and employees who have all been flexible and dedicated during this time. DDS, like other agencies, has been affected by COVID-19 and has had employees test positive. DDS has a very extensive process for cases once the agency has been notified.

The Commissioner directed the Board to the timeline narrative. After the March Board meeting, the agency started thinking about how to ensure the safety of the employees and deliver services in a way that DDS has never done. This involved determining how the agency could provide limited services to reduce the amount of people coming into the centers. Commissioner Moore's concern was offering services to the elderly in the age group of 60 and over without them leaving their homes. The agency made a proposal to the Governor's office to extend that population's driver licenses. On March 13th, DDS made an announcement publicly in a press release. Then on March 14th, the Governor declared a public health state of emergency.

On March 18th, DDS was approved to suspend all road tests, which was a concern last Board meeting. The agency saw continued fear and concern from the staff. On March 20th, DDS had 237 people that did not show up for work. This crippled the agency. That number represents 23% of the work force. In some centers there was only one person that showed up, instead of the normal 6 or 7 team members. The agency was forced to start shutting down centers, one by one. On that day, DDS shut down 14 centers due to the lack of staff. On that evening, Commissioner Moore was able to get approval for DDS to stop face-to-face services until there was a better strategy to perform those services in a safe way. On March 21st thru March 31st, DDS did not perform any public facing services, which allowed a break to revamp and come back as a team. The agency looked at how to equip the staff with the tools to provide safe services. DDS purchased more than 50,000 gloves and 2,500 masks. As the Board is aware, face masks are the most sought-after item in the world, so, trying to get quantities of face masks was tough. DDS wanted to ensure once operations resumed on April 1st, the agency had all the personal protection equipment (PPE) needed. The Commissioner's desire was to provide staff with things to make sure they were safe. Consistent with recommendations from the CDC.

The agency made a request and received approval to extend all drivers who had an expiration date of March 14th through June 30th. DDS extended those licenses proactively for 120 days. A letter was sent out to those customers to inform them of the process. The response has been amazing. The agency has received several compliments on these proactive measures. Of the many services provided, at least 40% can be done virtually. Customers choose to visit a center because that is what they are use too. The Commissioner was happy to report that since the emergency declaration on March 14th, DDS had more than 55,000 customers perform a service online. The agency has more than doubled the number of transactions on the Mobile App.

Items the agency thought would be simple to obtain have not been. The Procurement department has gotten online before 8am and continued to work until 9pm searching for items, like hand sanitizers, face masks, gloves, and wipes. All these things, in many cases, are still on back order and things we ordered that should have arrived last week, have not. This has put the agency in a tough spot in providing additional items. Once the virtual operation plan was in place, the Contact Center, which is essentially 55 employees, was separated into smaller groups of 3 with enough social distancing to achieve the 6 feet for each person. The Commissioner approved 20% of our workforce to maintain alternative or work-from-home schedules. The DDS team also started to monitor daily the agency's workforce status. When DDS reopened on April 1st, the priority was to serve CDL drivers. These are the people who deliver grocery to the stores and supplies to our pharmacies.

Traditionally, our daily volume totals are in the thousands. On the Wednesday of April 1st, we had 537 customers statewide. The agency spread the volume out and, on Thursday, April 2nd, there were 469 customers. There were 548 customers on Friday, April 3rd, and 215 on Saturday, April 4th. We are serving Commercial Motor Vehicle drivers, 1st Responders, EMS, Law Enforcement, some of our Health Care Workers who need credentials to do their jobs and limited new-to-Georgia drivers who need to establish a benefit in relationship to this pandemic. The Commissioner said his hat is off to Director Kecia Bivins, Deputy Director Pierre Miles and the Field Operations team, because it is a daily challenge. We have provided all the PPEs possible to ensure, if contact, which is very limited and short, takes place, our employees are not exposed.

The Chairman asked, "If a driver has not gone through the REAL ID requirements and their driver's license is due to expire during this period, would they get a credential for this time and then come back and prove who they are?" The Commissioner said, "That is correct. They would get the credential they have, but of course, when they come back in the 4 month period, they would have to get the REAL ID." The numbers given to the Commissioner shows Georgia is 98.02% REAL ID compliant. Overwhelmingly, most citizens are REAL ID compliant. The agency has conducted a big push to make sure DDS is as close as possible to 100%. These customers are potentially not REAL ID compliant. The Chairman asked, "With the rate of people moving and going back home because of this virus, if someone needed a credential and did not receive it at their normal address, could they go to our website and make contact with an agent to get one?" How would that work?" The Commissioner said if a person changed their address and did not let DDS know, the agency will miss those people. Commissioner Moore answered a similar comment from someone he believes was from the Governor's office. It is incumbent on the citizens to let DDS know when they change their address. The licenses are being sent to the address on record for that individual.

Board member Britt Fleck wanted to publicly thank the Commissioner. She reached out to the Commissioner for help with Georgia Power's vehicle tag renewals. The deadlines and the local office closure were presenting problems. The Commissioner assisted her in getting extensions on those renewals. Commissioner Moore thanked Britt Fleck for asking for assistance. It resulted in a communication with DOR that gave them an opportunity to see how they could proactively push registrations out. DOR was not aware of what DDS was doing on the licensing side, so it allowed them to transition to a posture similar to DDS. The Chairman thanked Britt Fleck for bringing that up. This is an example of a wonderful agency.

DDS has already started looking at operational plans, so when services resume, the agency can handle the increased volume. There will be a lot of young drivers that are going to need road tests once services resume. The agency wants to ensure DDS can handle those groups. A positive thing that has come out of this is, DDS has seen up to a 10% increase in people that are transitioning from a class D to class C using online services. DDS has previously tried to push this transaction to online services. The agency is getting customers to understand the capabilities of online services. It is the Commissioner's hope that after these events, DDS will get more people to utilize online services and the mobile app.

The Commissioner ended his report by explaining the agency is not really focused on the stats at the moment. The focus is on ensuring the services that DDS provides, are provided safely. All the services provided right now are by appointment only. Customers may complain at some point that they went to a customer service center and DDS staff would not let them enter. We want Team Members to turn around customers that are not requesting an essential service. The Chairman asked if we had something

on the door explaining the process in nice, customer-focused terminology. Director Kecia Bivins is working with the Communications team to put signs on the doors immediately. There are social distancing signs in every facility so those customers that do come into the building know DDS is practicing social distancing. The Chairman asked the Commissioner to address another thing that has come up nationally, the salary of the employees during the time they cannot work. He wanted to know how the salaries are being managed by the agency. All DDS staff were paid from March 21st through March 31st, including part-time employees. This is consistent with the guidance and direction the agency was given. Chairman Connell said, for the most part, all government employees will be following something established throughout the State. The Commissioner said that is correct. The agency does not have the unilateral ability to create the rules, DDS follows whatever the State has issued.

The Chairman opened the floor for questions or comments. Board member Rachel Little asked about a bullet point on the PowerPoint about hiring additional staff. She wanted to know if DDS was still looking for additional staff and if there is a way the Board can assist. Commissioner Moore informed her the agency is preparing to look for staff. The challenge the agency has with onboarding staff is being able to practice social distancing. The agency would normally hire 20 to 25 people at one time. That number has dropped to 10 based on the current guidelines. The Commissioner does anticipate DDS is going to be able to hire, because there are team members that are eligible to retire, who are choosing to retire. There are team members who are new to this workforce and do not understand the agency's essential nature. They will say that, this is not the job for them, so the Commissioner anticipates we will be hiring. The Commissioner will reach out to the Board to assist with whatever resources they have to obtain good people when that time comes.

Vice Chairman Markey shared a few things. One of the big challenges Coca Cola has is, they continue to produce and sell beverages globally, although it is a reduced portfolio because of the pandemic. They have a lot of concern about maintaining the quality of their operations with ongoing audits, so they are doing that process virtually. Vice Chairman Markey went on to thank the Commissioner for his help with a small issue. The Commissioner helped an international colleague of his, and the response time, as always, was within a couple of hours. He said that is really appreciated. He has not heard of any challenges on their CDL side, but he would ask. The Commissioner said if they have any questions or suggestions the agency could respond to, DDS would be glad to assist.

Rules for Initial Approval

Angelique McClendon, General Counsel, reviewed the following rules:

- **375-3-1-.02** Applications and Supporting Documentation

Bob Pierce motioned to approve the initial rules for adoption; Jeff Wigington seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Rules for Final Approval

- ~~375-5-1-.04~~ ~~Clinic Requirements: Application Driver Improvement Clinic License~~
- ~~375-5-1-.06~~ ~~Nontransferability~~
- ~~375-5-1-.07~~ ~~Display of License~~
- ~~375-5-3-.03~~ ~~Procedures for Commercial Driver Training School License~~
- ~~375-5-3-.04~~ ~~License fees~~
- ~~375-5-3-.05~~ ~~Expiration of License~~
- ~~375-5-3-.06~~ ~~Non-transferability~~
- ~~375-5-3-.07~~ ~~Display of License~~
- ~~375-5-3-.09~~ ~~Renewal of License~~

Bob Pierce motioned to approve the final rules for adoption; Jeff Markey seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Citizen Waivers

1. Marie Arlene Butero – She is seeking a Georgia driver's license in the name of Marie Arlene Butero. She is 58 years old. She is missing her first marriage license which was incorrectly filed by the Chapel. She submitted her birth certificate, child's birth certificate (surname of mother – Young, surname of father – Siefke, child – Krystal Ann Siefke), two expired California (CA) licenses, marriage certificate (married to Michael Butero), disposition of human remains, envelope mailed to Marie Siefke, no record found for marriage to Robert Siefke, and two Social Security cards (S/S) (Marie Arlene Siefke & Marie A. Butero).

Wallace Coopwood motioned to approve the waiver; Bob Pierce seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

2. Tamara Josephine Crawford – She is seeking a Georgia driver's license in the name of Tamara Josephine Crawford. She is 53 years old. She is missing her birth certificate with her first and middle name. She submitted a birth certificate, baptismal certificate, adoption documents (parents – Ruben N. Zaragosa and Lynn J Zaragosa, natural mother – Carole Hawkins), marriage license (married Alan John Kasher), two expired Texas licenses, marriage license (married Clark Wilson Crawford), child's birth certificate (father's name – Clark Wilson Crawford), expired CA license, valid Indiana driver's license, voter registration, and two S/S cards (Tamara Crawford & Tamara Josephine Zaragosa).

Bob Pierce motioned to approve the waiver; Jeff Wigington seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

3. Troy Allen Guevara – He is seeking a Georgia driver's license in the name of Troy Allen Guevara. He is 78 years old. He is missing his home born birth certificate. He submitted his baptismal certificate, school record, marriage application, marriage certificate, expired Louisiana driver's license and S/S document.

Jeff Wigington motioned to approve the waiver; Wallace Coopwood seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

New or Old Business

The next Board meeting will be held on May 13, 2020 by conference call.

Adjournment

There was no further business to discuss; Chairman David Connell called for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Bob Pierce and seconded by Britt Fleck with unanimous approval by the Board.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Wigington